

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 INR-07 NSC-05 EURE-00

SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 /043 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7620

AMCONSUL ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 5089

FOR UNDER SECRETARY HABIB AND ASST SECRETARY HARTMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR YO

SUBJ: CALL AT FSFA

REF: (A) BELGRADE 5067, (B) BELGRADE 5078, (C)

BELGRADE 5085, (D) BELGRADE 5084

1. SUMMARY: MOST OF CALL BY ACTING POLCOUN AT FSFA (KELIC) WAS DEVOTED TO DISCUSSION OF CURRENT EMBROGLIO. KELIC WAS DEFENSIVE WHEN ASKED TO CLARIFY FSFA STATEMENT TO TANJUG (REF B) AND CONSTANTLY REVERTED BACK TO TOTH CASE. HE WAS NOT FORTHCOMING WITH RESPECT TO FSFA PRESS STATEMENT OR YUGOSLAV PRESS CAMPAIGN. END SUMMARY.

2. REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF UNSUBSTANTIATED AND UNTRUE STATEMENTS IN FSFA RELEASE (PARA 6 AND 7, REF B) WAS AMONG POINTS RAISED BY ACTING POLCOUN AT FSFA (KELIC, NORTH AMERICAN DESK) DURING 40 MINUTE MEETING WHICH ORIGINALLY HAD BEEN SCHEDULED AS INTRODUCTORY COURTESY CALL. KELIC IMMEDIATELY LAUNCHED INTO YUGOSLAVIA'S STANDARD POSITION ON TOTH CASE DURING WHICH HE SAID REPEATEDLY THAT TOTH HAD CONFESSED TO CHARGES AND THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD INSISTED TO EMBASSY TO "LEAVE IT ALONE, LET US DO OUR BEST" (TO WORK FOR RELEASE OF TOTH) AND THAT AMERICAN REMARKS
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QUESTIONING TOTH'S TRIAL AND IMPRISONMENT QUESTIONED ALSO

VERACITY OF YUGOSLAV JURIDICAL SYSTEM. THROUGHOUT, ACTING POLCOUN EMPHASIZED OUR CONVICTION OF TOTH'S INNOCENCE AND, IN ANY EVENT, RESPONSIBILITIES OF USG TOWARDS ITS CITIZENS.

3. KELIC ASKED FOR COPY OF DEPARTMENT PRESS STATEMENT OF JULY 31. AFTER REMINDING KELIC THAT WE HAD SOUGHT IN VAIN FOR APPOINTMENT YESTERDAY PRECISELY TO HAND OVER STATEMENT, ACTING POLCOUN ASKED WHETHER FSFA COULD ISSUE STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO ONE IT HAD NOT RECEIVED. KELIC INSISTED, AFTER READING STATEMENT, THAT IT HAD IN FACT BEEN RECEIVED SEPARATELY BY FSFA. KELIC WAS ANXIOUS TO LEARN GENESIS OF STATEMENT, "WHO ISSUED IT" AND WHETHER "FUNSETH PUT IT OUT." ACTING POLCOUN STATED WHETHER OR NOT IT CAME FROM FUNSETH DIRECTLY, IT WAS ISSUED IN NAME OF DEPARTMENT AND REPRESENTED VIEW OF ENTIRE USG.

4. ASKED BY ACTING POLCOUN WHAT NEXT, KELIC STATED "IT IS UP TO YOU TO SAY WHAT COULD BE DONE FOR THE GOOD OF RELATIONS." HE WOULD NOT BE MORE SPECIFIC ON THIS COMMENT AND IT WAS ONE OF FEW HE DID NOT REPEAT.

5. AT THIS POINT KELIC MENTIONED AMBASSADOR'S SPEECH AT BLEND. SAID HE HAD TOLD EMBASSY, "THAT IT WAS VERY BAD. IT WAS NOT THE OCCASION TO TELL 70 AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN ABOUT TOTH. THAT WAS HIS (AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN'S) FIRST MISTAKE." WHEN PRESSED FOR CLARIFICATION, KELIC MERELY SHRUGGED.

6. THROUGHOUT CONVERSATION ACTING POLCOUN: (A) STRESSED VALIDITY OF DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT OF JULY 31 BOTH IN TERMS OF US RELATIONS WITH YUGOSLAVIA AND REGARDING AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN ; (B) EXPRESSED BEWILDERMENT THAT IF GOY SOUGHT CLARIFICATIONS (AS KELIC SAID IT HAD BEEN DOING LAST WEEK) IT DID NOT ASK EITHER EMBASSY OR DEPARTMENT FOR SUCH, RESORTING INSTEAD TO PRESS CAMPAIGN; (C) REGISTERED DISAGREEMENT WITH VARIOUS UNTRUE STATEMENTS IN FSFA RELEASE ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF FACT THAT GOY WAS WELL AWARE OTHER

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ACVJ#OF ALL OF AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN'S SPEECHES AND STATEMENTS ON YUGOSLAVIA INCLUDING HIS COMMENTS TO PRESS

AT BELGRADE AIRPORT AFTER RELEASE OF TOTH; AND (D) ASKED WHY GOY WAS WEAVING INTO ITS COMMENTS ALLEGATIONS OF US HOSTILITY TOWARDS NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE AND MOVEMENT WHEN IT WELL KNEW US POSITION TOWARD NAC AND TOWARD YUGOSLAVIA

AND ITS ROLE IN NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT.

7. COMMENT: LAST THURSDAY AT AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION FOR DATT/AIRA, KELIC WAS ALMOST JOCULAR, EXCHANGING PLEASANTRIES WITH OTHER GUESTS, BUT INSISTING HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT WHAT WAS GOING ON SINCE HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM VACATION. IN CONTRAST, AT THIS MORNING'S MEETING HE WAS CLEARLY UNCOMFORTABLE, POINTING OUT SEVERAL TIMES THAT PRACTICALLY EVERYONE ELSE IN HIS OFFICE WAS ON LEAVE. HE EVEN INDICATED MODICUM OF CONCILIATION TOWARD ACTING POLCOUN WHO WAS PAYING FIRST OFFICIAL CALL ON KELIC.

8. NEVERTHELESS, HE WAS NOT FORTHCOMING. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES, I.E., ESCALATION OF MATTER TO HIGHEST LEVEL HERE, THIS WAS SOMEWHAT UNDERSTANDABLE.

9. SUGGEST THIS BE READ IN CONNECTION WITH BELGRADE REFTELS. SWEITZER

NOTE BY OC/T: BELGRADE 5089, PARA 6(C) # AS RECEIVED. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTERVENTION, PFOR YO, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, AMBASSADORS, PRISONERS RELEASE, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BELGRA05089
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760298-1224
From: BELGRADE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760894/aaaadeil.tel
Line Count: 135
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BELGRADE 5067, 76 BELGRADE 5078, 76 BELGRADE 5085, 76 BELGRADE 5084
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 MAY 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <14 SEP 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CALL AT FSFA
TAGS: PFOR, YO, US
To: SECSTATE WASHDC ZAGREB
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006